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Young Men's Christian Association of Montreal

For release at will.

RECORD YMCA CAMPAIGN RUNS UNTIL MARCH 17

The Montreal YMCA's biggest ever financial campaign is well underway with more than \$131,000 in advance gifts already received.

The drive runs until March 17 and has an objective of \$375,000. While part of the proceeds will be channeled into a number of selected programs of social action, most of the proceeds will help support vital work with young people.

"The search for answers to the bitter hostility and uncaring masks with which so many young people face adults is being pursued on many fronts," notes Lorne G. Main, Vice-President, Hawker-Siddely Canada, and General Chairman of the YMCA campaign.

"One of the things the YMCA is trying to do here is to foster the sort of initiative and self development that will help prepare youth to challenge nihilistic militants and look for alternatives to anarchy and revolution."

"This sort of preparation, backed by warm family relationships, can also motivate youngsters to stay in school, check the spread of drug-taking and ease the way through the pre-teen years and adolescence to maturity," he says.

Mr. Main suggests that youth's alienation--whether active or passive--is frequently intensified by the belief that most adults

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are indifferent or unaware of social inequities and obsessed with the pursuit of material possessions.

"Space-age technology has helped raise the art-science of disseminating information to an unprecedented level, but done little to bridge the generation gap," he deplores.

"On the contrary, it may have deepened misunderstanding and aggravated growing-up problems by spotlighting how advances in machine-making and gadgetry have, apparently, outstripped humanistic development."

For the growing number of young people who avoid contact with any of society's institutions, the Y operates a wide range of outreach programs. Staff members involved in this work make contact with young people wherever they meet.

"Their job is to listen, help identify concerns, answer questions, join in the development of co-operative answers," says Mr. Main.

In-branch programs of leadership training, physical education and self-development have also been updated. New ways are being developed to strengthen family relationships by preparing them to understand and cope with change, and by providing more opportunities for parents and children to spend at least part of their leisure time together.

"Calls for the YMCA to assist community groups are also proliferating," observes Mr. Main.

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"These sometimes ask only for help in assessing issues and charting courses. More frequently, however, they require also that the Y muster resources, co-ordinate efforts and be both a long-term leader and participant."

Efforts to help promote French-English understanding are also being stepped up. New lines of communication have been opened, and a number of co-operative projects initiated.

"This emphasis on co-operative undertakings is also reflected in work with immigrants. YMCA staff members in this field concentrate on explaining the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens, and on encouraging newcomers to the country to develop the self-reliance and initiative to join the main community," says Mr. Main.

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